

c.21.3 : nursing



Red Cross nurses being presented with cups

c.21.3: Cambridge NURSES Chronicle, by Mike Petty

1897 05 03

Jubilee appeal – nurses, p2

1900 03 23

At Addenbrooke's Hospital there is a training home for nurses, which is one of the most successful institutions of its kind. It makes a significant contribution to the funds of the Hospital. For this reason alone it is well worth the while of the Governors to give their best efforts in maintaining it in a high state of efficiency 1900

1900 06 06

We regret to announce the death of Miss Mary Kingsley, the West African traveller and writer. She did not go South Africa to nurse but it seem that, on landing, she found opportunity for using her overflowing energies in tending the sick and wounded. While thus engaged she was herself taken ill. A few months ago Miss Kingsley attended and spoke in Cambridge at a meeting of the "Magpie and Stump".

1902 03 14

Sir – A man from the Cambridge prison, which they knew to be infected with smallpox, was admitted to the Sanatorium and yet no precautions were taken in the way of vaccination. His nurses passed into

the room day and night. I object strongly to the want of promptitude in telephoning me as soon as smallpox was suspected so that I might be aware of the possible danger and be able to take precautions. I would not allow my patients to go to the Sanatorium if they are to be exposed to such risks – E. Lloyd Jones.

1902 04 14

Sir – a recent article in the “Cambridge Express” stated that the Chairman of the Public Health Committee had to stop ‘larking’ between a nurse and an undergraduate in the scullery of the Sanatorium, and that another professional man had been pestered by a nurse to take her to the Theatre and upon this being indignantly refused he was insulted by with a letter asking him to visit the nurse’s rooms at night. These are serious allegations against the character and conduct of the nurses. Not one of the statements is correct – J. Congreve

1902 10 01

A fire broke out in the women’s ward at the top of the left wing of Addenbrooke’s Hospital. In a very short time the flames secured a firm hold and the unfortunate patients had to be removed. Flames burst through the roof and worked towards the centre of the building. Nurses and probationers heroically entered the wards and brought their patients to a place of safety. Many scenes, tragically distressing, were witnessed. To such proportions did the fire assume that it was deemed advisable to remove other patients and several afflicted old men were brought to the lawn. The news of the outbreak spread quickly throughout Cambridge and some thousands of people gathered in front of the Hospital.

1923 05 23

Typhoid fever was present in Cambridge during the year, 17 cases in 14 households having been notified. Four were county cases admitted into Addenbrooke’s Hospital for treatment; five were imported from Fenstanton, Swaffham, Norfolk, Littleport and London. Two cases were probably due to eating shellfish. Two were nurses who had charge of typhoid patients and others could not be accounted for. Three of the cases proved fatal

1906 04 09

A fatality occurred at the portion of the river known as Paradise; two nurses from Addenbrooke’s Hospital hired a Canadian canoe but it overturned and they were precipitated into the water. One clung to the boat and with the aid of a pair of horse reins was brought to the bank. A man pluckily jumped into the river after the other nurse but the depth of the water – about 15 feet – made it impossible for him to reach her. Eventually the clothing of the unfortunate lady was hooked but she had obviously succumbed. 06 04 09d

1908 10 02

A nurse at Fulbourn Asylum had died from typhoid fever: she was in the habit of drinking the water unboiled and a specimen had been sent to be bacteriologically examined. A scheme for the improvement of the disposal of sewage had been suggested but not yet carried out. The nurses were lunacy trained and not competent to nurse a case of enteric fever. Patients were treated in the Asylum infirmary but the attendants were moved as early as possible to Addenbrooke’s Hospital. CWN 08 10 02 & 08 10 02 p5

1908 11 06

The Cambridge District Nurses moved into their new home standing in its own grounds on Newmarket Road. Designed by W.M. Fawcett and built by Coulson and Lofts, it has a smart exterior appearance. Facing the road is the entrance to the surgery with the dining room, and kitchen with sitting rooms for the Superintendent and nurses on the first floor together with four bedrooms and another three on the second floor. The building is lighted by incandescent gas and fitted with electric bells. CWN 08 11 06 p5

1910

1910 05 06

Under the new Midwives Act no woman can habitually attend women in childbirth unless she is certified. There were 54 midwives on the register of whom 30 were trained. Ten of the untrained women were between the ages of 65-75 and might need replacing before long by reason of death or infirmity. There was only one trained midwife at Willingham and an untrained woman at Landbeach. There were none at Isleham, Burwell, Wicken, Upware, Milton, Cottenham, Swavesey or Histon. Some mothers can afford the fee of a medical practitioner but are unable also to pay the full fee of a skilled nurse and so may turn to unregistered women 10 05 06b & c

1911 04 28

An Inspector's report on Cambridge Workhouse criticised arrangements in the sick ward, the dietary, bathing arrangements and care of children. The sick ward contained 25 male and 28 females with only one partially trained nurse and a woman who came in to sit up at night. The majority of the bed-ridden cases were helpless and a great deal of the actual nursing was done by paupers. There were no modern conveniences and the female side top floor had only a drinking water tap fixed over a basin. A new midwifery ward had been erected with no sink or hot and cold water 11 04 28e

1911 11 24

The Intelligence Department of the War Office have been busy making a minute return of everything likely to be of use in case of war. The number of horses available, places suitable for camps, locality of wells, blacksmiths' shops and farms have all been noted. Cambridge would be a great medical base and a Red Cross hospital would receive medical and surgical cases from all the county hospitals in East Anglia. The headquarters of the surgical division would be at King's College and the medical wards in the Senate House. The nurses would be quartered in Downing College. 11 11 24c

1911 12 01

There is no doubt that lunacy is steadily increasing owing to the strenuousness of modern conditions. The asylums were never so full as they are today. We have a higher sense of duty to those bereft of reason than obtained fifty years ago and place under restraint cases that would formerly have been allowed to be at large. Fulbourn Asylum is overcrowded and there is no accommodation for further nurses which is especially important as the female side is understaffed. Unless there is some decrease in the number of patients additional expansion will be necessary 11 12 01c

1912 07 12

Chesterton workhouse has been criticised by a lady inspector. The nursing staff was totally inadequate at the time of her visit with a solitary nurse on duty in the sick wards doing the work of three. Another complaint was that the young children were relegated to the care of incapables or undesirables. The lady visitor may be somewhat faddy but there must be some foundation for her strictures. 12 07 12d

1913 03 07

Addenbrooke's Hospital nurses dies typhoid *

1914 05 08

County health visitors scheme – district nurses not qualified – 14 05 08f

1914 07 10

Cambridge Voluntary Aid Detachments and Red Cross held an exercise at Newnham College. It assumed severe fighting had been going on in Norfolk and a large number of casualties had been sent to the First Eastern General Hospital. When another train load of wounded arrived they received orders to convert Sidgwick Hall into a temporary hospital where eleven beds were provided and patients were treated for crushed hands and fractured tibia. Other nurses were prepared splints and bandages and a septic ward was set up 14 07 10 p4

1914 08 14

Arrangements are in hand for the accommodation of a very large number of wounded in the event of Cambridge being established as a base hospital and completely equipped wards have been fitted up in many of the colleges. Nearly 100 Army Nursing Corps nurses have been quartered at Downing College and a large number of beds lent by various colleges. Scores of voluntary workers are making clothing. Accommodation for 500 wounded may be required when the Great Court of Trinity College would become a huge temporary hospital 14 08 14 p5

1914 12 25

Nurse Boutle of South Street volunteered for foreign service with the Red Cross Society. She was taken prisoner in Brussels and sent to nurse wounded German and French soldiers. When the Germans refused to let them go she disguised herself and after a risky journey and an exciting incident with a German sentry – three minutes afterwards a man was shot at the same spot – she reached the coast. On the crossing the steamer passed two floating mines. She had no complaints about the conduct of the Germans who saluted nurses in the street.

1916 10 25

VAD nurse at First EGH, occupied rooms at Selwyn where large number of nurses have been accommodated; dies after dressing gown catches fire – 16 10 25e

1917 02 07

Dorothy Nicholls of Fulbourn – nurse on Russian front; description of journey – 17 02 07a

1918 02 20

Fulbourn Nurse Honoured. Nurse Dorothy Nicholls, daughter of Dr and Mrs. Nicholls, of Fulbourn, has been awarded the 1914 Bronze Star by the Red Cross Society, which has been forwarded with notice from the War Office. Nurse Nicholls has been in France for six months. Previous to that she was for 18 months on the Russian Front, and has had some wonderful experiences and marvellous escapes.

1920

1920 10 02

Kate Martin of Kingston Street awarded OBE for her work as nurse in explosives factory; was at Woolwich Arsenal and reduced number of girls suffering from TNT poisoning - CDN 20 10 02

1930

1930 06 19

The New Cherryhinton Nursing Association was wound up; the nurse's time has been by no means fully occupied and much has been of an unskilled nature. Now Nurse Hodges has left. 2,204 visits had been made during the year but many people prefer to employ a private nurse rather than the district nurse, although she is fully qualified for every branch of the work. The district was growing but new people seemed disinclined to join the Association. 30 06 19d

1938 04 02

Miss Moggach has retired as Matron at Addenbrooke's Hospital after 13 years. There have been many changes: the number of beds has increased from 190 to 320 and the number of nurses from 48 to 180. A preliminary training school for nurses has been established, a bed endowed at Delhi in memory of former matron Mary Cureton and a fund started for a chapel for nurses. She took a keen interest in nurses' recreations, starting the various sports clubs and presenting the first cups for tennis. 38 04 02a

1930 03 03

The A.R.P. First Aid post at Auckland Road will be staffed by a doctor and trained nurse and give more extensive first-aid. Two practices have already taken place. A sham air raid was enacted last

night with casualties brought in by ambulance and unloaded by stretcher bearers. Nurses and orderlies under the direction of Dr Walker, dealt with them. Realism was added by squibs which were let off and red paint was used to give the impression of real wounds. 39 03 30 & a # c.45.7

1939 04 29

In the event of war there would be several hundred thousand casualties in the first few weeks. Cambridge was tolerably safe from air raids but patients would be transferred to Addenbrooke's Hospital from other areas. But there was a shortage of nurses. A nurse could do a great deal for a casualty with no hospital, but a hospital could do nothing for a casualty without a doctor and a nurse – 39 04 29 & a

1940 08 16

Duchess's Tour. The Duchess of Gloucester visited Cambridge on Tuesday. At an emergency hospital, the whole of the nursing staff, regular and auxiliary, were lined up and inside the ward, the royal visitor talked with some of the patients, including several members of the B.E.F. back from France. On leaving the Hospital, the Duchess chatted to nurses and members of a Scottish regiment. An R.A.F. sick quarters, which is entirely nursed by the Red Cross, was the next place of call. After inspecting two of the wards, the Duchess saw a short display of surgical work by the nurses. Proceeding next to the University examination Hall, now an emergency ward of Addenbrooke's Hospital, the Duchess saw some of the American ambulance units presented to the region. After inspecting the joint war organisation emergency hospital stores, the Duchess had tea with Sir Montagu and Lady Butler at Pembroke Lodge.

1941 07 04

Leg-up, — Stockings (writes Watchman) are to be provided as part of the uniform supplied to nurses at institutions controlled by the Cambridgeshire Public Assistance Committee. At a meeting of the Committee on Wednesday, the chairman (Mrs Hellish Clark) said the nurses could not possibly afford coupons for stockings to wear with uniform.

1942 02 14

Nurse Gertrude Prior awarded for distinguished service in Middle East – 42 02 14a

1942 11 06

Call for more Nurses, — A very large audience assembled at the Cambridge Guildhall to hear an appeal by Miss Florence Horsbrugh, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, for more women to take up nursing both nationally and locally. The occasion was a concert contributed to by distinguished artists, who gave their services for the Civilian Nurses Air Raid Victims Fund. # c.45.7

1947 11 13

There is a need for part-time nurses in Cambridgeshire and a campaign to recruit them is to be launched. Fulbourn was described as being "in a dangerous position" and one of the main difficulties mentioned by the Matrons of hospitals in the area was getting people for night and weekend work. Asked for their views Mrs Ditchburn said: "We at the County Hospital are very fortunate. We are well staffed and have our full complement". Mrs Mace explaining the position at Chesterton said approximately a third of the present staff was part time, which meant the night, weekend and early morning duties fell to the permanent staff. Mrs Bradley said that Linton was only one short of the full complement. At Fulbourn they had 32 permanent and 27 part time nurses to look after 528 patients

1948 07 05

Under the new National Health Service the Nursing Association service is to be taken over by the County Council. In reviewing their history it was reported that Mrs Marcus Dimsdale and Mrs Mellish Clark were put on the newly set up County Insurance Committee in 1911 one of the tasks was to provide nursing for patients suffering from tuberculosis who, owing to the acute shortage of sanatorium beds, had to be treated in their own homes. It was discovered that less than half the

villages in the county had the services of a district nurse. A public meeting was held in 1913 and it was agreed to form a County Nursing Association

1948 11 10

At Cambridge town council Councillor Knox Shaw said "The nursing position is very serious. We do need a large number of nurses if we are to carry out the instructions of the ministry - that they should not work more than 96 hours a fortnight. Unless we can get more accommodation for nurses, we might find that we will have to close down wards in the hospitals. The waiting list in the hospitals at the moment is over 1800 and if we have to close down the wards the position will be more and more serious". Accommodation for over one hundred nurses was required

1949 03 23

Cambridge is pioneering in Britain a scheme by which suitable cases, instead of being nursed in hospital, will be nursed in their own homes, thereby saving up to 30 hospital beds. There was unanimous agreement that the scheme for home nursing and care could and ought to be brought into operation at the earliest possible moment. "It has tremendous possibilities", said Dr Banks. The local health authorities can do practically anything for the person ill in his own home except give him money.

1949 10 31

"Are the County Health Committee washing their hands of conditions in Fowlmere?" asked Counc. Mrs R. Briggs. "There are at least 200 Poles living there in the most squalid conditions possible and liable to be a source of disease to others in the village". A Polish speaking nurse was needed to overcome the language difficulty as doctors were finding it a complete waste of time trying to treat Polish children without any knowledge of the language. The Polish families had squatted on the site of a disused aerodrome. Now they were subjects of the country, they should be absorbed into the population and enjoy the amenities of the place where they were living

1952 02 21

Sixteen patients were moved to safety when fire broke out in the nurses' quarters at the Evelyn Nursing Homes, Trumpington Road, Cambridge. One of them was 102 years old. The Fire Brigade tackled "the biggest job for a long time" and brought the fire under control. Chief Fire Officer, Mr Tom Knowles, paid a tribute to the conduct of the nurses: "They were cool, calm and collected and completely unflurried; they might just have been making a cup of tea", he said

1952 07 19

The nursing staff position on the female side at Fulbourn Hospital remains serious. It has the valuable services of 41 part-time nurses but owing to their domestic commitments it is often difficult to get enough at peak periods such as weekends when the burden of nursing is borne by the depleted full-time nursing staff who number 26 instead of 80. A total of 1,426 patients were treated during the year and there were 925 in the Hospital on December 31st 1951

1954 01 27

The extension to the nurses' training school in Owlstone Road, Cambridge has everything for the convenience of the nurses. There are two shampoo rooms where the girls can wash their hair, two ironing rooms and a drying room for doing their washing and provision may be made for a small kitchen so they can fill a hot water bottle at night. Each bedroom has its own washbasin, while the dressing tables are really dressing-tables-cum-writing desks. A games room has been provided where they can enjoy table tennis or listen to the radio. There is also a piano so they can hold dances there if they wish. With such ideal conditions it will not be surprising if would-be-nurses will want to come to Cambridge for their training.

1954 02 17

Extensions to the Owlstone Road training school for nurses in Cambridge will provide accommodation for 70 more nurses in a fine new building with all the advantages that new methods in

architecture can produce. In the nursing career there is none of the 'too old at 40' business. The fully qualified nurse has a secure career in a variety of appointments until she chooses to leave at the retiring age. But she must always remain receptive to new ideas and changing methods

1954 06 18

The new Mayoress, Mrs H.R. Mallett, came to Cambridge during the Great War as a young nurse at the First Eastern General Hospital and there she met her husband who was a sergeant-major in the Medical Corps. Nurses in those days received £10 a year, plus £3 beer money but the uniform, lodgings and washing were all found. They mostly lived in their uniform and had nothing to spend the money on except a few clothes. The beer money went in afternoon teas and cakes on their off-duty days. The job was fun but the discipline strict.

1957 03 29

Nurse G.A. Dorrington of Coleridge Road is a midwife who has brought over 3,800 babies into the world. For 30 years she has been on call night and day, attending women in their own homes across Cambridge. Occasionally she visits a woman having a baby and finds she actually delivered the mother many years ago. Now she has been awarded the M.B.E. 57 03 29

1960s The Cambridgeshire Collection has newspaper cuttings files from this date

1960

1962 05 29

The Queen arrived in Cambridge to a fanfare of trumpets and over 2,000 people stood in the biting wind to welcome her as she opened the new Addenbrooke's Hospital. With Miss M.M. Puddicombe, the hospital matron, she walked past a line of nurses to the marquee where the ceremony was held before touring various wards speaking to patients. Later the Queen visited King's College chapel to see the newly-installed Rubens painting and toured the Papworth Village Settlement 62 05 28 & a 62 05 29a

1963 01 10

Recently qualified State Registered Nurses were present with their certificates at the Preliminary Training School, Owlstone Road. Miss Puddiscombe, the Matron, outlined the current situation at Addenbrooke's Hospital and its various departments 63 01 10b

1964 11 20

Nurses cartoon – 64 11 20a

1970

1972 10 28

Addenbrooke's Hospital will have to use many self-employed agency nurses to cope with the extra beds in Stage II of the new site. The hospital could need 100 extra nurses. Miss Mary Bonner, the chief nursing officer said; "Our total complement is somewhere between 800 and 900 nurses in the hospital group - but we will need all those for Addenbrooke's alone in 1973. With 841 beds, eight suites of theatres, the new accident admissions units and the out-patients department we will still need between 200 and 300 more nurses. An agency nurse can expect to earn around £25 for a 30-hour week, a little more than the hospital-employed nurse

1973 01 18

Nurses desk jobs, p18

1973 04 13

Nurses at Chesterton Hospital have dreaded what might happen if flames gripped the most vulnerable of their wards. Sister Pat Hough, of Harston ward, said, "Our ward has 19 continuous care patients. It

has a wooden floor and it is above the kitchen". But yesterday she was a lot happier after a mock fire exercise at the old people's home in which a new invention came through its first test. The invention - a harness that lies under the mattress and clicks like a car safety belt into an emergency hammock for the patient - is the brain child of the Hospital's fire officer. She said: "The first patient was down the fire escape 35 seconds after the alarm went off. That is about four times quicker than we could have expected if we had used the conventional method"

1973 07 17

A "stress centre" may be set up in Cambridge for student nurses under pressure in their professional and personal lives. This is because stress is causing many of them to give up their careers while still in training. For a number of reasons such a centre could not be established for some time, but in the meantime doctors are thinking about carrying out a psychological assessment of those nurses who want to give up their jobs, and appointing a full-time counsellor to give advice to hospital staff generally. It is thought that as many as 15% of those leaving could be suffering, unknowingly, from some form of psychiatric illness

1973 11 03

Nurses under stress, p5

1974 05 13

An experimental five-day ward at New Addenbrooke's hospital, Cambridge, has opened. Five patients requiring minor surgery were admitted, and barring any unlikely complications, they will be back home by Friday. The ward is an attempt at cutting the hospital's long waiting list and at the same time offering a five-day week for nurses. On Friday night, they pack up for the weekend and the patients go home. The free weekends, it is hoped, will be more attractive to staff, and it is staff the hospital is very short of.

1974 11 11

Sir – In the death of Mrs Doris Ditchburn, Cambridge has lost a much-loved citizen who will be missed by a wide circle. She and her husband came to Cambridge in 1934 to work at the old County Hospital in Mill Road. Together they worked to improve the standards of the hospital and towards her dream of a first-rate maternity hospital. Mrs Ditchburn was a most understanding person and most unlike the old-fashioned dragon of a matron, but insisted on a high standard from her nurses and gained their affection and respect. – Margaret Reed

1974 12 10

Large-scale ward closures at both Old and New Addenbrooke's hospital are planned over Christmas and New Year because not enough nurses will be available to staff them. Patients will be sent home and only emergencies dealt with. The closures have been made necessary because the Health Minister, Mrs Barbara Castle, has ordered that nurses should take an extra six days holiday before March 31st next year and wants the leave taken as soon as possible. A nurse said: "We obviously welcome the extra leave, but it was not necessary for Mrs Castle to order it to be taken right away. We feel she took the measure to placate the more militant member of the profession"

1975 12 22

Charges should be made for treatment in hospitals, doctors should be freed from committee work and top-heavy administration should be pruned to bare essentials if the National Health Service is to be cured of its present malaise, the Cambridge surgeon, Prof. Roy Calne, says in a long letter to 'The Daily Telegraph'. He says the service is afflicted by what little money there is being spent on the organisation and administration of care and not on the improvement of conditions in the hospitals. Doctors and nurses are being taken away from patients to sit on committees and become involved in administration. Token payments from patients towards food and medicines whilst they were in hospital would help ease cash problems in the service.

1980

1981 09 04

As a midwife, Phyllis Baker has brought 2,001 babies into the world. She started at Mill Road Hospital in 1940 when the maternity ward was full of pregnant evacuees and most local people had their babies at home - only going into hospital if there was something wrong or her housing conditions were particularly bad. She has made numerous friends: "I walked into Sainsbury's and somebody said 'Hello, Nurse Barker, this is one of yours' pointing to her child". 81 09 04

1982 01 15

Community nurses along with home helps and the meals-on-wheels service form the basic support for many old people. They treat burnt legs – quite common in cold weather as the elderly tend to sit very close to fires and fall asleep. Many ladies cling stubbornly to the homes in which they have lived for half a century or more, often without central heating, indoor lavatories and in some cases electricity or hot water. Two or three elderly people in Romsey have only gaslight while others insist on using candles. 82 01 15

1986 01 30

Hard-up Cambridge nurses are having to moonlight in pubs and cafes just to make ends meet. Some even go on 'sick' leave so they can hire themselves out to nursing agencies for extra cash. A staggering 40 per cent of nursing staff working full-time earn less than the official poverty level of £111.60 a week and some qualify for rent rebates. Nurses who are exhausted and burnt-out cannot provide the quality of care they should and fine staff are being forced out of the profession, they claim. 86 01 30

1987 10 01

Low salaries are driving thousands of nurses out of the National Health Service. A 28-year-old staff nurse at Addenbrooke's Hospital earns just over £8,000 a year (worth about £18,400 today) for her highly skilled, highly rewarding and highly frustrating job in neuro-surgical ward, A3. Major brain surgery has become a routine operation. Twenty beds are housed in a room off one long corridor with four others in 'The Annexe' intensive care unit. 87 10 01c

1988 02 03

Cambridge's nurses took to the city's streets for a day of action – and praised the public for backing their battle to save the NHS. More than 100 nurses marched from Shire Hall to Addenbrooke's Hospital where at a mass rally they spoke about their low pay and poor working conditions. Wages range from £5,400 for a newly-trained nurse (worth about £11,934 today) up to £12,000 (£26,500) for a sister. But a bed-sitter cost £100 a week - what many nurses take home in net pay. Some can claim supplementary benefit, even though they are in full-time employment, and many have to 'moonlight' in shops and bars. 88 02 03, 88 02 08

1988 02 08

Nurses too poor to live in Cambridge – 88 02 08

1990 04 05

Hundreds of low-paid Cambridge nurses are hunting for second jobs to pay their poll tax, a union chief claims. Some 500 nurses in training who on salaries ranging from £5,695 to £6,630 are paying between £48 and £82 a month for bed-sitter flats at Addenbrooke's Hospital. Now they face an additional bill of £428 for poll tax 90 04 05b